

**Council on Graduate Studies**  
**Assessment of Student Learning Requirements for Graduate Degree Programs at**  
**Eastern Illinois University**

**Adopted November 1, 2005**

**Introduction:** In 2004-2005 the Council on Graduate Studies established a Subcommittee for the Assessment of Graduate Degree Programs. The Subcommittee recommended the adoption of the Assessment of Student Learning Requirements for Graduate Degree Programs at Eastern Illinois University as outlined below.

**Background:** The Subcommittee conducted research on current graduate assessment plans and on best practices in graduate assessment. The Subcommittee also consulted with the Center for Academic Support and Achievement. The Subcommittee determined that the following graduate learning goals best reflect the mission of graduate education and are dominant among current graduate degree programs.

- A depth of content knowledge (85% of programs currently include)
- Critical thinking and problem solving skills (55%)
- Effective oral and written communication skills (45%)
- Effective technology skills (20%)
- Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity (75%)
- Ethical behaviors (20%)

**Approval of CGS 05-22:** Following campus-wide discussion, the Council on Graduate Studies adopted the following four learning goals for all graduate programs.

- **A depth of content knowledge.** The depth of content knowledge can include program learning objectives related specifically to the knowledge base as defined by the discipline but can also include learning objectives related to ethical behaviors and professional responsibility; specific skill sets in the areas of technology, leadership, management, or laboratory procedures; application of theory into practice; and/or competency as a performer, educator, or conductor.
- **Critical thinking and problem solving skills.** Critical thinking and problem solving can be assessed through various class assignments including laboratory procedures and reports; application of case studies and other simulated situations; and evaluations of health/medical status as well as by performance on the program's comprehensive knowledge component.
- **Effective oral and written communication skills.** Oral and written communication skills typically are assessed throughout the students' degree program. Regular course assignments, including position papers, lab reports, research reviews, technical presentations, debates, and facilitated discussions as well as performance as a graduate assistant, if appropriate, can be utilized.
- **Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity.** Advanced scholarship through research and creative activity is a critical component of all graduate degree programs. Evidence of scholarly activity might include formulating, conducting, and presenting original research, critically reviewing and synthesizing existing research, designing artwork or other creative works and composing a musical piece.

**Effective Date:** By June 1 (beginning 2006 and continuing annually), all graduate degree programs will submit their program's assessment summary to the Center for Academic Support and Achievement. The Director of the Center will review each plan in relation to the North Central Association of the Higher Learning Commission's Guidelines for Assessment and provide detailed feedback for continuous improvement of the program. Programs may schedule meetings with the Director to discuss assessment plan components, objectives, and measurements. The Director will provide a summary of findings to the Dean of the Graduate School to share with the Council on Graduate Studies in order for the Council to fulfill its role of advancing the quality of graduate education. **The expectation is that within two years or by June of 2007, each graduate degree program will have an assessment plan that addresses each of the four learning goals.**